1875-1922].

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Miloslav Szabó is a Slovak historian with a special interest in the modern and contemporary history of his country, with a particular concentration on the story of the Jews in Slovakia during the last decades of the 19th century. He has worked at the Center for Research on Anti-Semitism at the Technical University of Berlin, at the Jewish Museum in Prague, and most recently at the Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies in Vienna. In this his latest book, which bases its arguments upon archival studies conducted in several countries, he deals with the role of anti-Semitism in the Slovakian nationalist movement – that is to say the period from around the middle of the 19th century to the foundation of the state of Czechoslovakia. He thus presents us with an important piece of the history preceding the First Slovak Republic, which, collaborating with National Socialist Germany, deported the bulk of the Jews of Slovakia to the Nazi extermination camps.

In the introduction to his work, the author explains his intention to study the impact of the ideology of modern nationalism on the political thought and activity of representatives of the Slovak national movement during the period of dual monarchy in the Habsburg Empire. The nationalist policies of the Hungarian-led administration of Slovakia provide a sort of background to the period under discussion. Szabó points to this administration's repression of such expressions of Slovak nationalism as the foundation of high schools and national institutions, which led Slovaks to hate not only Hungarian nationalists – who were responsible for this repression – but also the Jews, who allegedly assisted the Magyar nationalists during the period. Starting from this point, Szabó provides a detailed account of the leading arguments used to provide a historical explanation of Slovak conduct. Being relatively unsophisticated, the local population could be easily incited against the Jews, using the traditional allegations of ritual murder, the arguments of political anti-Semitism and through the popularization anti-Semitism. Attacks centered on what was purported to be the Jewish "nationality" and the "Jewish race". The author goes on to discuss the various forms of anti-Semitism present in the country at the time, as expressed in religious hatred, in economic envy, in objections to the "other," and in representations of the Jew as a danger to the life of the population in general.

Szabó discusses how the topic calls for broad-based reflection on the Slovakia of the time before 1875. In the late 19th century, Slovak nationalism underwent a crisis, probably as a reaction to the heightened pressure of the Magyar-dominated state institutions that administered the country. Subsequently, Slovak nationalists directed their response to this pressure into an increasingly vigorous anti-Jewish campaign and began to turn their attention to what they referred to as the "Jewish question." This turn of affairs signaled the beginnings of political anti-Semitism in the country, a phenomenon that was to play a decisive role in Slovakia's history for more than 100 years. It is possible that it was only the defeat of Communism that finally somehow succeeded in diminishing the intense pressure and focus of this type of Jew hatred amongst the population. The discussions presented by the author emphasize the interplay of impacts caused by the anti-Semitic waves churned up in Hungary, waves that reached as far as the country's legislature, and by the attacks suffered by Jews at the hands of Slovak Judeophobes.

In particular, Szabó focuses on the role and activities of the important writer and journalist Svetozár Hurban-Vajanský, a Lutheran by faith, and offspring of an important Slovak family of political nationalists. Hurban-Vajanský had an on-going rivalry with another politician and writer of his time, Viliam Pauliny-Toth. The latter was exploring ways of enlisting Jewish support for the Slovak national movement. The clash of the two schools of thought represented by these writers symbolized Slovak uncertainty on how to treat the Jews of Upper Hungary. The hostile school of Hurban-Vajanský was to eventually win out – with considerable assistance from Magyar Judeophobes, as it happens. On this topic it would seem useful to keep another clash in mind, the one that obtained between popular resentment of Magyar-led persecution of Slovak nationalism, frequently described by Slovak nationalists as an attempt to strangle the Slovak desire for national development, on the one hand, and the hatred of Jews inspired by Magyar nationalists on the other. At the same time as characterizing Jews as a Magyar tool of oppression against the Slovaks, nationalists in Slovakia were taking in and learning from Hungarian ways of fighting Jews. Thus Jews were seen as tools of the Magyar, a manipulated people, but also as sworn enemies of the Slovak project.

Under the influence of German racist ideologists, Hurban-Vajanský was to develop a searing hatred of the Jews. His anti-Semitism was informed by a crude mixture of religious, racial and social prejudices and of economic and sexual fears. He urged the Slovaks to defend their "racial purity" and the Magyars to give up their attempts to take an integrationist path in relation to the Jews, and to take up the struggle against the "Jewish peril" hand in hand with the Slovaks.

Hurban-Vajanský then became interested in nationalism in its purer form. The Magyars termed nationalism in Slovakia "Pan-Slavism" and the use of this expression led the discourse of Slovak nationalists to take on an unmistakable anti-Jewish color, including an emphasis on ritual murders allegedly committed by Jews, and the expression of sympathy with the pogroms then happening in Russia. He regarded these pogroms as a form of self-defense by the Slavs against the Jews. Thus, Hurban-Vajanský sought to justify the outrages committed in Russian cities, and the increasing use of brutal force against Jewish settlements and inhabitants. He proposed and

encouraged similar forms of "self-defense" in Upper Hungary. However, it should be emphasized that pogroms after the Russian model never took place in Slovakia, at least not until the deportations that were to occur during the Holocaust.

Hurban-Vajanský also reflected on the phenomenon of Catholic nationalism, which was just then developing in Slovakia, and on political developments in Upper Hungary. He discussed the possibility of mutual cooperation between elements holding anti-Jewish ideas and those wedded to Catholic thinking. The disagreements and quarrels between the various schools of thought present in Upper Hungary at the time were gradually taking on violent form, with frequent physical skirmishes occurring during the election campaigns. Thus, the parliamentary elections of 1896 in Hungary were accompanied by frequent street fights. Regular attacks on capitalism and on liberalism, which were widespread in Catholic writings internationally at the time, and which blamed Jews for both ideologies, were also quite frequent in Slovakia during the period. Hatred of Jews was routinely preached and popularized by the catholic clergy. It is now well accepted that Catholic writers widely regarded liberalism and capitalism as a largely Jewish invention. These patterns of thought were frequently detectible in Hungarian and the Slovak Catholicism. Any of the multitude of anti-Jewish cartoons discovered by Szabó and presented in his book might have quite happily been printed in Julius Streicher's "Der Stürmer". But the cartoons collected by Szabó were taken from the pages of contemporary Slovak press, in particular its Catholic incarnation. Two pre-eminent news topics captured the attention of the public during those days on the subject of alleged Jewish infamy: firstly, the frequently-discussed murder in Tiszaeszlár of a Christian girl, and secondly, the assassination of a Czech girl allegedly committed by a Jewish vagrant going by the name of Hilsner. While the allegations that Jews were responsible for the deeds in both cases were proven to be false even at the time, the public accepted them with obvious gratification and were quite willing to use the stories to spread accusations against the blood-thirsty Jews.

Ideological disputes in Hungary at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century became fairly frequent. While Jews called for social emancipation for themselves, the public turned this on its head, calling for "emancipation from Jews". This was the source of the expression "from words to deeds" in the book's title: it was under this motto that Slovak intellectuals began to develop more specifically anti-Jewish activities. Such public figures as Dušan Makovicky, Karel Kálal and Eduard Lederer, but above all the Norwegian writer Bjoernstjerne Bjoernson, appealed for worldwide public attention and exposed Magyar-led discrimination against Slovaks. In these efforts the presence of anti-Semitism was less strong – indeed some leaders of the pro-Slovak campaigns were actually Jewish. Yet, an anti-Jewish public refused to be impressed. At that time – i.e. the end of the 19th century – the public witnessed the creation of a new, liberal, Slovak ideologico-political group: the "Hlasists". While Hlasists objected to the traditional, conservative thinking up until then widespread amongst the Slovak public, the new movement continued to spread anti-Jewish propaganda. A leading personality within the group, Vavro Šrobar, who did not hesitate to attack Jews in such measure that contemporary American Jews were forced to intervene on behalf of their brothers in Slovakia. Strangely, Šrobar regarded himself asa disciple of the well-known Czech humanist and liberal philosopher Tomáš G. Masaryk.

The anti-Jewish struggle was concentrated in the hands of Magyar Catholic land owners who were suffering economic crisis and diminishing opportunities for marketing their agricultural produce at the time. They blamed Jews and capitalists as responsible for their setbacks. Unwilling to attack Jews directly, Magyar spokesmen concentrated attacks on "Polish Jews," whose southward migration was alarming inhabitants of the territories south of Galicia. While the migrants were mostly dreaming of boarding boats bound for America, some Magyar leaders paid special attention to the Galician Jewish peril. Curiously enough, patriotic Jews of Hungary also developed objections to these "Ostjuden".

Szabó then turns back to deal with attacks on economic capitalism, a system that had set down deep roots in a number of cities in Upper Hungary. The Judeophobes of that city emphasized Jewish economic activities, and in particular their involvement in usury, which was then considered destructive to the well-being of the peasantry. Once again, the accusation was deployed by Catholic political science, using racist arguments, encouraging the cooperative movement as an instrument of resistance against Jews and Jewish commerce which was then becoming popular within the Slovak working class. Here also we can sense the hatred directed against Jews, who were charged with responsibility for spreading socialist thought. Eventually, resistance to Jewish socialists would take the form of a struggle against the "Judeo-Bolsheviks". Economic anti-Semitism was embraced by the Hlasists, who thus provided yet another source of critical arguments against the Jews. Szabó points out the importance of the well-known sociologist Anton Štefanek, considered the founder of Slovak sociology and another disciple of Masaryk. During the time of the Slovak State, Štefanek became the pride of Slovak political science and a leading scholarly critic of Jews. His attacks on Jews, together with those by other Hlasists, contributed to a specifically Slovak theory of anti-Semitism. The writings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain spread in Slovakia. Theoreticians dealt with the "Jewish Question" and with ways to resolve it. The campaign against the Jews during the time took on fairly radical expression and involved a variety of ideas and personalities. In this regard the activity of otherwise primarily liberal personalities is worth noting. For example, the Moravian Karel Kálal, the Slovak Igor Hrušovský and a host of others, all engaged in spreading hatred of the Jews. The campaign of Magyarization for Budapest drew objections from many quarters, including such Czech Jews as the aforementioned Eduard Lederer. Lederer was later, after 1922, to head the Jewish section of the Czechoslovak ministry of education and was popular neither with Orthodox Jewry, who disliked his reformist approach to religion, nor with the Zionists, who suspected him of being minded towards assimilationism. It should be emphasized that members of the Czech Jewish assimilationist school of thought, the "Čecho-žíde", harbored some antipathy to the Jews of Slovakia, as both the Zionist and the Orthodox currents within the region's Jewry made matters difficult for those who aspired to assimilating them. However, in several Slovak cities there existed a Jewish assimilationist group by the name of Rozvoj (Development). Yet even Rozvoj was not accepted particularly warmly by Slovak nationalists, who saw it as a predominantly Jewish organization.

One interesting subsection, which departs somewhat from the subject of the Jews of Slovakia, is devoted to subject of Leo Tolstoy, Dušan Makovický and the issue of anti-Semitism. Makovický spent a period of time as Tolstoy's physician. He disliked Jews, a trait relatively common among the Slovak intelligentsia. Makovický made a number of efforts to persuade Tolstoy to issue anti-Semitic statements, but failed. The few words of Tolstoy in this vein that do exist and are sometimes directly quoted were apparently actually Makovický's, artfully attributed to Tolstoy.

The final chapter of the work is devoted to the years immediately after WW I. It does not follow on very closely from the earlier sections dealing with Magyar rule in Upper Hungary. While it does put forward several interesting and innovative insights, it lacks the natural flow of the earlier chapters. What it does manage is to reveal the anti-Jewish policies of the newly formed provisional Czechoslovak government of the time. However, missing from it is any discussion on important issues that may have been inherited from the governments that preceded it. The take-home message, however, is that the Slovak establishment hated Jews above all other groups, to the neglect of the Hungarians, despite their oppressive nationalist anti-Slovak rule.

Szabó has provided the Slovak and Jewish public with an interesting and important study. To date, those interested in the history of Jewry in Slovakia had to make do with a few brief statements disclosing the deep hatred for Jews harbored in particular by such figures as Ludovit Štur and Hurban Vajanský. Szabó has for the first time provided us with fuller details on the subject. These shocking details go a long way to explain the Slovak treatment of Jews during the holocaust. They also make it clear that the case of Josef Tiso was more than just an aberration, and that the esteem conferred in some circles to this day on "national hero" Andrej Hlinka, accompanied by the denial that he was in an anti-Semite, is utterly inappropriate. The hatred displayed by the Slovak intelligentsia and all too often also by ordinary Slovak people was so deeply seated and so vehement that must surely shock the reader. The book's narrative does not, and of course cannot, provide explanations, rational explanations, for that utterly incredible and unnatural hatred.

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